

Genesis 20

Read Genesis 20:1-17 : Abraham wanders south, like he did in Genesis 12, during the famine. This is 24 years later; but he does a similar thing with Sarah. He tells everyone that she is his sister. This is a half-truth. They have the same father. This time he does not go all the way to Egypt. He just goes to the far south of the Judean Desert to Gerrar. Similarly to Pharaoh, the King of Gerrar sees Sarah as desirable for himself. He took Abraham's wife away for the second time. Like Pharaoh, the King of Gerrar also has a bad dream about meddling with Abraham's family. God said he would kill him for taking Sarah.

God adds to the dream, that the King of Gerrar needed to make financial restitution or he and his whole family would die. The King begs for mercy in his dream, since he did not touch her. God did not let that happen. God also told the King that Abraham would have to pray for him to heal.

It was not unreasonable for Abram to go there, even though there were godless people there. Genesis 15 lays out the land that God gave Abraham; which is much larger than modern Israel.



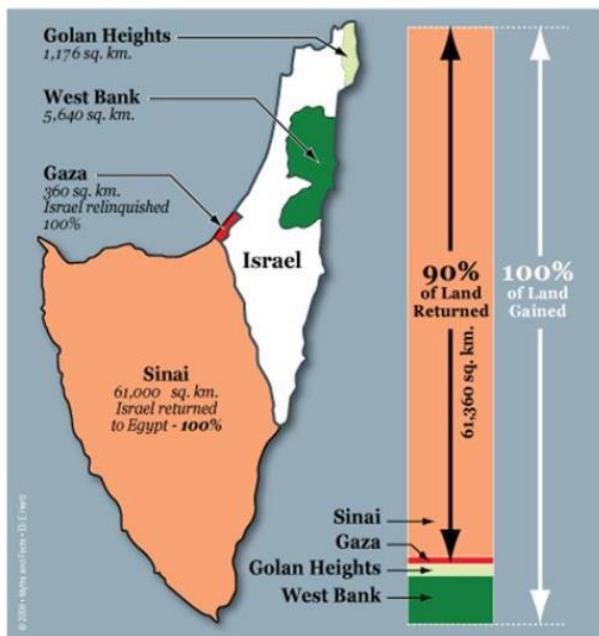
This was actually Abraham's property, but he hung onto things loosely. This will also be the millennial kingdom's boundaries. God actually told Abraham to walk

the whole land grant given to his descendants; so, this was an act of obedience once again.

"Arise, walk in the land through its length and its width, for I give it to you."
(Genesis 13:17)

In that day there will be a highway from Egypt to Assyria, and the Assyrian will come into Egypt and the Egyptian into Assyria, and the Egyptians will serve with the Assyrians. In that day Israel will be one of three with Egypt and Assyria—a blessing in the midst of the land, whom the LORD of hosts shall bless, saying, "Blessed is Egypt My people, and Assyria the work of My hands, and Israel My inheritance." (Isaiah 19)

Today, the Jews are living on a small portion of what is their property (given by God). They keep letting their unfriendly neighbors' chip away at their property. Right after Israel was re-granted its homeland, the neighboring Arabs attacked. The 1967 war resulted in Israel getting a chunk of land back; which it later gave back to the surrounding countries.



The King of Gerrar gave consolation gifts and the rite to stay anywhere on his land. It is interesting, since it was really Abraham's land.

Abraham prayed to heal the King and his family. Apparently, God used more than a threat to convince the King to help Abraham. God affected the king's family's

health in some adverse way as well. God kind of made Abraham to have power over the king....just like Moses and Pharaoh.

It is interesting that all of the references say that Abimelech, the King of Gerrar was a Philistine. All sources also say that the Philistines came to the middle east around 1200 BC. Genesis 20 took place around 1900 BC. Either that king was not a Philistine, or the dates for the Philistine migrations are wrong.

We should always ask “Why”. Why did Abraham have to get into this pickle to begin with? Sometimes we can get a clue from names of places. He stayed in between Kadesh and Shur, at Gerrar. Kadesh means holiness. Shur means a wall, and Gerrar means a lodging place. All said, he was trying to seek God and be holy, but he hit a dead end. This test is not about controlling himself. It is dealing with the uncontrollable things in life. Like Moses pinned at the Red Sea, God was his only way out.

We might be able to have some level of control over ourselves; but we cannot control others. Abraham freely gave his nephew, Lot the first choice of his land. He freely left his community for God. He was able to let go of things. Abraham was historically able to walk away from things when he had to. But this was the second time that he got into this situation with his highly- desirable wife. Presently, Abraham struggled with his prized wife attracting dangerous men. He was protecting himself more than he was protecting her.

I believe that our strengths and weaknesses can be like Siamese twins. For example, I feel like I can sniff out a phony person in a heartbeat; but I can also be critical. Likewise, Abraham was able to maintain a loose grip on material things; but he lost his wife twice. Was he in sin to not disclose the details of his marriage?

He failed forward. He got his wife back, untouched. He received some treasure and livestock. He also became feared as a representative of God. I have discovered that in my own life, that sometimes God’s Kingdom makes more progress with my failures than in my successes. In fact, my faith grows through setbacks more than anything. If I am doing great, the spiritual content of my life can become modest. If I am suffering, I am much more likely to bring God into the picture.

Abraham, like all of us, can do well under some trials and yet fail at others. We may do ok in the face of angry opposition, while being a sucker for flattery. Some

Christians have a lifetime of hardship, because any freedom or reprieve they receive results in poor personal decision making.

There are so many areas of testing. Like David and Joseph, Abraham is a good faith example that is well-illustrated in his life experiences. He also showed he had courage, when he rescued Lot and the others from an invading army. Later on, he was tested by placing his precious son's life at risk. We probably also are well served not to depend on schemes or half-truths to stay off of the enemy radar. God is going to get more glory when we are clear and truthful.